

Top 10 Tips for Teens Completing Job Applications

1. Take your time filling out your application!

Don't rush.

Make a list of all the information you need to include in your application before filling it out. Don't rush filling it out because you might miss something. Be thorough with filling out your application. See "application cheat sheet"

2. Neatness counts

Write clearly. If the app lets you type in the application, type it! If employers can't read what you've written, they won't know it's you they want to talk to.

3. Show the employer that you can follow directions.

Be sure to fill out all sections of the application form. If you don't have information to put in a box, you can say N/A or "not applicable". Review the questions carefully to make sure you understand what they're asking for.

4. Check your application for spelling and grammar mistakes.

Review your application before submitting. Show that you are a professional by ensuring your application is error free, legible, and filled out to the best of your knowledge.

5. Make sure you emphasize the job responsibilities of your past jobs which are most relevant.

List the most relevant activities first when describing your previous jobs, so your key qualification is easily noticed. Use action words to lead your phrases when describing past jobs.

6. Employers of teens value reliability, especially in terms of attendance and punctuality.

Try to incorporate references to perfect attendance and punctuality, if possible.

7. No work experience yet? Include volunteer work, honors, or awards.

If you don't have formal work experience, list jobs like babysitting, yard work, participation as an officer in a club, and volunteer work on your application. Honors and awards are good evidence of a strong work ethic! Include yours to let employers know you have potential for their jobs.

If you've held a volunteer job, you have job history! Many volunteers forget to include this when they are applying for paid work. Be sure to add that in your employment history on your application.

8. Get a list of references

Have these names ready! See application cheat sheet. Most employers will request 3-4 references - people who can vouch for your work ethic and responsibility. You should ask several people who might be willing to give you a good recommendation, should they be contacted by a potential employer.

9. Be prepared to furnish names, job titles, and contact information for your references.

If you haven't held a formal job, consider asking families for whom you babysit, teachers, or even coaches. Let people know if you plan to list them as a reference so they won't be surprised if they get a call or an email message from an employer.

10. Check your phone for messages or follow ups.

You will be listing your phone number on the application, so be sure your voice mail greeting is a suitable for an employer to hear. Also, check your messages regularly so you don't miss a call in case they want to invite you for an interview!

What Managers Are Looking For...

Availability

Can you work the schedule they need? Managers want to know if you have enough time to work what they need at their locations

Professionalism

Are you a reliable and have good work ethic? Show this with a nice resume, courteous cover letter, and a clean and appropriately dressed appearance.

Positive Attitude

Employers want people who want to be there. Smile and be friendly. Don't speak negatively about previous employers or jobs. Focus on the positive. You don't have to kiss butt to show you're enthusiastic about the opportunity. Be friendly and interested. That's enough.

...How Do Managers Find It

Resume

Your resume should be well organized, clear, and concise. A well-organized resume communicates your experience to the employer, indicating a level of professionalism.

Cover Letter

You've seen this phrase before, but why do it? This letter is the document that introduces you. What the application and resume cannot say (like "why you'd like to work there" and "why are you changing professions" may be communicated in a well written cover letter.)

Interview

Be on time! Dress appropriately! Remember to speak clearly, make eye contact (not the creepy kind), and smile throughout. This is your chance to put the face to the name on paper.